Goodman, Lizzy. *Meet Me in the Bathroom: Rebirth and Rock and Roll in New York City, 2001-2011*. New York: Harper Collins, 2017. 640 Pp.

Meet Me in the Bathroom: Rebirth and Rock and Roll in New York City, 2001-2011, Lizzy Goodman's fantastic new oral history of Brooklyn and Manhattan's indie rock scenes of the early 2000s, is rightly being regarded as the definitive work on this music and its milieu. It functions as a bildungsroman for the likes of the Strokes, Interpol, The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and LCD Soundsystem. Goodman's book will fit snugly on your shelf alongside Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain's *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (1996) and Michael Azerrad's *Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Indie Underground, 1981-1991* (2001).

Beyond its significance in the field of American cultural history and being a phenomenally entertaining read, it is an excellent descriptive work of business and economic history. Nowhere else have the microeconomics of the music industry at the dawn of the twenty-first century been analyzed as thoughtfully. *Meet Me in the Bathroom* does in small scale what Steve Knopper's *Appetite for Self Destruction: The Spectacular Crash of the Record Industry in the Digital Age* (2009) did in large scale several years ago. Through a panoply of voices, Goodman shows how musicians, promoters, music fans, and record labels both large and small in a particular time and place negotiated the technological changes which led to the disruption of the recording industry.

Goodman was very much a part of the scene which she brings to life in this book. She notes in the preface that she is a personal friend of Strokes guitarist Nick Valensi. Her intimate knowledge of the scene shines through on every page, as her interviewees describe with great nuance the making of the world they inhabited for much of the last decade. It shows how a group of like-minded young people, many of them emerging from art schools and liberal arts colleges, converged on long depressed sections of lower Manhattan and Brooklyn and built a music scene in these spaces. This network of dive bars, lofts turned illegal apartments, and warehouses

turned practice spaces or jerry-rigged music venues became the places that cultivated the angular garage rock, punk-inspired dance music, and freak folk of the New York scene. The transformation of the Lower East Side and Williamsburg, Brooklyn into the epicenters of the New York indie scene set in motion the "colonization" (p. xvii) of neighborhood after New York neighborhood, especially in Brooklyn, by people in search of the emerging hipster lifestyle. The gentrification of Brooklyn initiated in large part by the indie rock scene was one aspect of a larger remaking of post-9/11 New York into a playground for globetrotting elites, pricing people of modest means out of even the outer boroughs.

Though focused on the recent past, *Meet Me in the Bathroom* covers terrain that is very much a part of the past. It describes the experiences of the last generation of rockers to be wined and dined by the major labels before technological changes sapped the likes of RCA, Interscope, and Geffen of their primary revenue streams. Certainly, artists such as the Strokes and Interpol acquired considerable amounts of treasure as a result of their recording careers, but they hardly became fabulously wealthy rockstars in the Rod Stewart or Bon Jovi sense of the term. Even groups like the Killers and Kings of Leon, bands whose take on the sounds of the early 2000s New York underground won them broader audiences than the Strokes, sold a fraction of the albums that major alternative acts like Soundgarden and Stone Temple Pilots did during the 1990s. File sharing services, CDs burned on computers, and the decline of terrestrial radio cut labels and their artists off from the lion's share of their revenue. The inability of musicians to make fortunes selling their albums fostered a decline in the taboos surrounding serious musicians "selling out." By the end of the aughts, indie artists entered into business relationships that would have been unthinkable a decade earlier. Strokes t-shirts were available at your local Target and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs licensed one of their songs for a Cadillac commercial.

At 640 pages, this door stop of a book at times sacrifices its focus for inclusiveness. While this book does an excellent job litigating the dynamics of Brooklyn's "colonization," it displays some sociological blind spots in other regards. Many of the interviewees genuflect unflatteringly before the now fashionable opinion that all was right with

New York when it was a profoundly more dangerous place. There is no doubt that virtually all of the interviewees who express that opinion genuinely believe this. Collectively, though, this chorus that glamorizes the social pathologies they witnessed reveal a contempt among the city's creative classes for those that live alongside them not because they chose to move to a certain part of New York but because New York is their home. Despite these minor quibbles, *Meet Me in the Bathroom* is an entertaining, informative book that makes major contributions in several historical subfields.

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In his 1989 article for *Technology and Culture* entitled "Aviation History in the Wider View," James Hansen lamented that aviation history lacked scholarly credibility. It tended to attract "buffs" whose publications were rather simplistic accounts characterized by an unquestioning "enthusiasm" for technology and a disconnection from larger historical narratives. In sum, he saw a desperate need for more scholarly studies that took a wider view of the history.